

The Temptation of Our Lord Matthew 4:1-11

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus Christ's temptation in the wilderness teaches us about the nature of temptation, the importance of the Word, and the character of Satan.

Scripture: Matthew 4:1

Topics: "The Word of God", "Temptation"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the temptations faced by Jesus in the wilderness, emphasizing that these trials were not only a preparation for His ministry but also a demonstration of His perfect obedience and reliance on God's Word. He discusses the three main temptations: the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and the lust of the eyes, illustrating how Jesus resisted each by quoting Scripture. Torrey highlights the reality of Satan as a personal tempter and the importance of using the Word of God as a defense against temptation. The sermon concludes with the assurance that overcoming temptation leads to divine support and ministry from angels.

Transcript

(Compare Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Lust of the Flesh--or The Flesh, vv. 1-4 What experience on the part of Jesus immediately preceded that of this lesson? (Mark 1:12). Can a man who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit ever be tempted again? At what time is Satan most likely to tempt a man? Was the baptism with the Holy Spirit a necessary preparation for Christ's public ministry? Is it for ours? Was the temptation a necessary preparation for Christ's ministry? (Heb. 2:17, 18). Is it for ours? Which do men usually most covet, the preparation of exalted privilege or the preparation of fierce conflict with the devil?

How did Jesus come to go into the wilderness? (Mark 1:12). Is there any lesson in that? Did the Spirit do anything else beside lead Jesus into the wilderness? (Luke 4:1, R. V.). Was He alone in the wilderness? Are we ever alone? Over how long a period did this temptation extend? (Luke 4:2). Did the three temptations recorded cover all the temptations of this period? What did Jesus eat during all that time? (Luke 4:2). Why did He eat nothing? In what physical condition was He at the end?

Did the temptation come from without or from within? Was the tempter a personal devil? With what did Satan begin his temptation? With what did Satan begin his first temptation of man? (Gen. 3:1, 4). What reason had Jesus for knowing He was the Son of God? (3:17). What did Satan bid Jesus do? What would there be wrong in His doing that? (Phil. 2:6, 8, R. V.). What made it a real temptation? Is there any record of practically the same temptation coming to Jesus again? (Matt. 27:40).

If Jesus had yielded to this suggestion of Satan, whom would He have been distrusting? When we take ourselves out of the position in which God puts us in order to relieve our distress, of whom do we show our distrust? Was it any sin for Jesus to be tempted? At what point does sin begin? How long did Jesus harbor the devil's suggestion in His mind? With what did He meet it? How many of the temptations did He meet that way? How did Jesus come to have at hand in the hour of trial just the Scripture that He needed?

What is the best thing that we can do, if we would not be tripped up in the hour of trial? (Ps. 119:11). Where is the Scripture found which Jesus used to defeat Satan with? (Deut. 8:3). How does it apply to the case? When can we find comfort in this verse? 2. The Pride of Life--or The Devil, vv. 5-7 Did Satan give up at this first defeat? What particular trait of character did Jesus display in a remarkable degree in the previous temptation? Along what line then does Satan tempt Him now?

Is there any lesson in that? What was the temptation? What did the devil quote to strengthen his case? Does the devil ever quote Scripture nowadays to lead men astray? Why was the devil's use of Scripture illegitimate? Where would have been the wrong in Jesus doing as Satan suggested? What is the point of difference between trusting God and tempting God? (To look to God to deliver us from perils that lie in the path into which He has called us is to trust God; to run into perils in a path of our own choosing and then look to God to deliver us is to tempt God; to look to God to supply our bread when in the path into which He calls and in which we cannot make it is to trust God; to look to Him to supply our bread when He bids us work to get it is to tempt God.)

When can God's children look to God to fulfill the promise Satan quoted? Do men who successfully meet the first and third temptations as recorded in Matthew (note the order of the temptations in Luke) ever fall before the second? How did Jesus meet this temptation? What passage in the same Psalm which the devil quoted is fulfilled in Jesus' answer? (Ps. 91:13). 3. The Lust of the Eye--or The World, vv. 8-10 Did the devil give up the battle after this defeat? Does the devil leave us when we defeat him on one tack?

What does he do? What was the next temptation as recorded by Matthew? Who else had promised Him the kingdom of this world? (Ps. 2:8). How is this kingdom to be attained according to God's plan? What then was the real essence of the temptation? (To grasp the dominion that was rightfully His by false means; to avoid the path of suffering that God had appointed and choose a path of compromise with evil to gain His dominion). When are we similarly tempted? Did the devil tell the truth when he said: "All this power ... is delivered unto me"? (Luke 4:6; John 8:44; 12:31; 14:30; Rev. 13:2, 7; 2 Cor. 4:4; Ro. 13:1).

What was the one condition of Jesus getting it all? Do men nowadays ever submit to that condition? How did Jesus meet this temptation? Did substantially the same temptations ever come to Jesus again? (Matt. 16:21, 23). How far apart in the Scriptures are these three quotations with which Jesus met the three-fold temptation of Satan? What did the devil do when Jesus overcame this last temptation? What did the devil do before he departed? (Luke 4:13, R. V.). Did he depart forever? (Luke 4:13; 22:28).

Who came to Jesus when the devil left? What will always happen if we successfully resist Satan? Which was better, the angels' food or bread made out of stones? To what did the three-fold temptation appeal?

(See 1 John 2:16). To what three-fold conflict of ours did the threefold temptation correspond? Where may we find a sufficient answer to every suggestion of the devil? In what are all these temptations one? Did the devil appear to Jesus undisguised? How does he often appear? (2 Cor. 11:14).

Did the devil intend to help or hinder God's cause? What did he really do? (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16). Do we ever get beyond temptation? What was the shield with which Christ quenched all the fiery darts of the wicked one? (Eph. 6:16). CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Jesus Christ

His divinity, 4, 7, 10; humanity, 2; dependence on the Word, loyalty to the Word, use of the Word, 4, 7, 10; surrender to the Spirit's leading, 1; unquestioning obedience, 10; perfect trust, 4; self-sacrificing love, 2-4 (cf. Phil. 2:6-8); triumphant victory, 4, 7, 10; matchless sympathy (cf. Heb. 4:15), sinlessness, suffering, 2-11 (Cf. Luke 4:2).

2. Satan

His reality, 3-10; personality, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10; names--the devil, the tempter, Satan, 1, 3, 10; daring, 3; cunning, 3, 6; malignity, 3-10; power, 6, 8, 9; ambition, 9; persistence, 8; defeat, 4, 7, 10, 11; work--suggests doubts, tempts to sin, 3, 6, 9.

3. The Word

Its divine authority, its sufficiency--a safeguard against unbelief and sin, 4, 7, 10; its protecting power--the devil's misuse met by an appeal to the Word itself (compare verse 6 with verse 7).

Jesus and the Word: He used it as His sole weapon in fighting the devil, 4, 7, 10; He conquered by it, 11.

Satan and the Word: he quoted it, perverted it, 6; was overcome by it, 11.

4. Temptation

Its author--the devil, 1.

Its object--even perfect men, 1.

Its time--after most exalted experiences, 1.

Its character--continuous, 2 (see Luke 4:2); multiform, 3, 6, 9.

Its value--preparation for service, 1; leads to angelic ministry, 11.

Its point of attack--our weakest point, 2, 3; our strongest point, 6.

Its agencies--our physical necessities, 2, 3; our desire for influence, 8; our desire for spiritual attainments, the Word, 6.

Its antidote--the Word of God, 4, 7, 10.

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